

Congressman Hastings made the following [statement](#) on the House floor May 2, 2011 honoring the life of Dennis Koehler:

"Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Mr. Dennis Koehler and express my deepest condolences to his family. Dennis died Sunday evening at the age of 69 following a battle with melanoma.

"South Florida has lost a true hero with the passing of Dennis Koehler. Dennis served our nation courageously during the war in Vietnam. After coming home to Palm Beach County, he ran for and was elected to a seat on the Palm Beach County Commission. During those eight years, he selflessly worked to help improve the lives of Palm Beach County citizens. He was well-known for his compassion and dedication to the community.

"Additionally, Dennis was a major advocate for veterans' rights. He is one of the founding members of Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) and served on VVA's first National Board of Directors from 1983 to 1985. A veteran himself, Dennis understood the importance of taking care of those who have served our nation with dignity and respect.

"As an attorney in private practice, Dennis has earned the gratitude of veterans throughout Florida by using his legal skills to fight for their rights and benefits. Two years ago, when one of my constituents lost his pension following a road accident, Dennis volunteered his time and knowledge to work with my Congressional office to have the Department of Veterans' Affairs reinstate my constituent's benefits.

"Dennis' activism on this tragic issue prompted me to introduce the *Veterans Pensions Protection Act* to ensure that veterans, and their surviving spouses and children, will never again face the threat of losing their pensions because they received payments to cover expenses incurred after an accident. I wish to dedicate the *Veterans Pensions Protection Act* in honor of Dennis Koehler for his lifetime commitment and service to this nation.

"Mr. Speaker, Dennis was a true patriot, a community leader, and an outstanding American. I am deeply saddened by his passing, which is more than a personal loss for just myself, but also a loss to the South Florida community."

- [ARCHIVED HEROES](#)